

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3417

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 8959

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: GENERAL MUJICA SAYS NO; THE MASSERA
CONNECTION STILL UNCLEAR

REF: BUENOS AIRES 8752

1. GENERAL RODOLFO MUJICA HAS ISSUED A STATEMENT TO THE PRESS IN CORDOBA DENYING THAT HE WAS INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITY. THE STATEMENT WAS INTENDED AS A REFUTATION OF DECLARATIONS MADE EARLIER BY RETIRED COL. OBON (REFTEL) INCLUDING MUJICA'S NAME AMONG THOSE ALLEGEDLY SUPPORTING OBON'S PLAN TO ESTABLISH CIVIC CENTERS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. MUJICA EVIDENTLY ADDED A VAGUE COMMENT THAT WHILE HE RESPECTED OBON'S REPORTED ASSOCIATES AS "HONEST AND WELL-MEANING", HE DISAGREED WITH WHAT THE OBON GROUP STOOD FOR POLITICALLY.
2. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, PRESIDENTIAL PALACE SOURCES HAVE DOWNPLAYED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE OBON ANNOUNCEMENT, ESSENTIALLY WRITING OFF THE EFFORT AS STILL-BORN. THEY REJECTED THE IDEA THAT ONGANIA WOULD GET HIMSELF INVOLVED.

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3. ASSOCIATES OF ADMIRAL MASSERA HAVE ALSO DENIED TO US THAT THE ADMIRAL IS BEHIND THE OBON MOVE. THESE SOURCES CONJECTURE THAT THE CIVIC CENTER IDEA MAY BE AN UNAUTHORIZED INITIATIVE ON THE PART OF MASSERA SUPPORTERS.
4. WHILE THE OBON STATEMENT MAY INDEED BE PREMATURE, THE EXPLANATION IN PARAGRAPH 3 ABOVE STRIKES US AS VERY WEAK. WE

CONTINUE TO HEAR REPORTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES THAT MASSERA IS PREPARING TO INTENSIFY HIS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN. A CLOSE FRIEND OF OAS HEAD ORFILA, FOR EXAMPLE, RECENTLY CONFIDED TO THE AMBASSADOR THAT ORFILA WAS CONVINCED MASSERA'S CAMPAIGN WAS ALREADY UNDERWAY. IN A RECENT MEETING BETWEEN MASSERA AND TWO VISITING U.S. ADMIRALS, MASSERA SHOCKED HIS AMERICAN VISITORS WITH THE INTENSITY OF HIS REMARKS BAD-MOUTHING PRESIDENT VIDELA. (DAO REPORTING SEPARATELY).

5. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR TO US WHAT MASSERA'S TACTIC IS AND WHAT PRICE HE IS WILLING TO PAY TO PROMOTE HIS CANDIDACY FOR NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. NOTWITHSTANDING HIS APPARENT GROWING INTEMPERATENESS, WE DO NOT AS YET SEE CLEAR SIGNS OF A WILLINGNESS TO "GO PUBLIC". HOWEVER, HIS PRIVATE GET-TOGETHERS WITH POLITICIANS AND TRADE UNION LEADERS MAY INDEED BE ON THE RISE AND BEAR CLOSE WATCHING IN THE COMING WEEKS. IT ALSO REMAINS TO BE SEEN HOW FAR MASSERA INTENDS TO GO IN PRESSING FOR A RESOLUTION OF THE "FOURTH MAN ISSUE" BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. PARADOXICALLY, IT SEEMS TO US, THE HARDER HE PUSHES, THE MORE LIKELY HE IS TO UNITE THE ARMY BEHIND VIDELA.

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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